

# **Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada**

## **Finding Aid - Annals Ingersoll, Ont. series (F01-S044)**

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# Annals Ingersoll, Ont. series

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, Ontario was first incorporated on February 15, 1891 under chapter 92 of the Statutes of Ontario, 1870-1. London, Ontario is on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, L#naapéewak, and Attawandaron Peoples.

On December 11, 1868, at the request of Bishop John Walsh, five Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto arrived in London, Ontario. Mother Teresa Brennan, Sister Ignatia Campbell, Sister Ursula McGuire, Sister Francis O'Malley and Sister Appolonia Nolan were accompanied by Reverend Mother Antoinette McDonald and were welcomed by Bishop Walsh, Rev. J.M. Bruyere, V.G., and Rev. P. Egan, pastor of St. Peter's Church. Awaiting the Sisters were sleighs that transported them from the train station to a temporary home at 170 Kent Street.

In accordance with their mission in London, three Sisters began teaching at St. Peter's School in January, 1869. After classes, they visited the sick, the poor and the imprisoned. They were also mandated to open an orphanage in the future. In order to accomplish these tasks, more Sisters and larger facilities were necessary.

On October 2, 1869, the Barker House at the corner of Richmond and College Street in North London was purchased and the Sisters moved there from Kent Street. The building was named Mount Hope, and it became the first Motherhouse of the Sisters, eventually housing the elderly, orphans, Sisters and novices.

On December 18, 1870, the Sisters of St. Joseph became an autonomous congregation in the London diocese, independent of the Toronto congregation. Sister Ignatia Campbell was appointed Superior General, an office she held until 1902. On February 15, 1871, the congregation became legally incorporated.

On October 7, 1877, an addition was made to Mount Hope. This building stood until it was demolished on August 3, 1980, surrounded by the growing healthcare institutions founded by the Sisters, beginning with St. Joseph's Hospital which opened at 268 Grosvenor Street on October 15, 1888, and followed by the opening of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing in 1895, and the construction of a new nursing school building in 1927, which saw its last graduation in 1977. On May 1, 1951, St. Mary's Hospital was opened,

followed by Marian Villa on January 12, 1966. In 1985, the hospital complex was renamed St. Joseph's Health Centre, and ownership was transferred in 1993 to St. Joseph's Health Care Society.

But it was not only in London that Sisters saw the need for healthcare and nursing education. On October 15, 1890, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital on Centre Street in Chatham, Ontario, which remained under their control until 1993. In 1895, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, which saw its last graduation in 1970. On October 18, 1946, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital at 290 North Russell Street in Sarnia which remained under their control until 1993. In Alberta, they administered St. Joseph's Hospital in Stettler (1926), St. Joseph's Hospital in Galahad (1927), the General Hospital in Killam (1930), and St. Paul's Hospital in Rimbey (1932).

On April 10, 1899, the Sisters opened Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse, Novitiate and Orphanage at the former Hellmuth College at 1486 Richmond Street North in London. The orphans were moved to this new location from Mount Hope, which remained a home for the elderly and was renamed House of Providence on June 3, 1899. The orphanage remained at Mount St. Joseph until it was moved to Fontbonne Hall in 1953 (to 1967). The original Hellmuth College building was demolished in 1976.

Later, on September 14, 1914, the Motherhouse and Novitiate moved to Sacred Heart Convent at Colborne and Dundas Streets in London, with the orphans remaining at Mount St. Joseph. The Sisters lived at Sacred Heart Convent until 1953, when they moved back to the newly built Mount St. Joseph, on the original location of the former Hellmuth College. The new Motherhouse and Novitiate was officially opened on June 29, 1954. It was here that they continued a private girls' school which had begun in 1950 at Sacred Heart Convent, and was now known as Mount St. Joseph Academy (to 1985). It was here too that they continued a music school which had also begun at Sacred Heart Convent and was now called St. Joseph's School of Music (to 1982). The Médaille Retreat Centre began here in 1992, and the Sisters also administered a Guest Wing for relatives of hospitalized patients (to 2005). The Sisters departed Mount St. Joseph for their new residence, a green building at 485 Windermere Road in London, in 2007.

On September 4, 1873, St. Joseph's Convent opened at 131 North Street in Goderich, Ontario, followed by other convents in Ontario, including Ingersoll (1879), St. Thomas (1879), Belle River (1889), Windsor (1894), Sarnia (1906), Kingsbridge (1911), Seaforth (1913), St. Mary's (1913), Woodstock (1913), Kinkora (1916), Paincourt (1923), Maidstone (1930), Leamington (1932), Delhi (1938), Tillsonburg (1938), Simcoe (1938), Langton (1939), West Lorne (1957), and Zurich (1963)

The Sisters also opened missions in other parts of Canada, including in Alberta: Edmonton (1922), Wetaskiwin (1929), St. Bride's (1934); and in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories Yellowknife (1953), and in British Columbia in Haney, now Maple Ridge (1956), and Rutland (1970). Branching even further afield, Convento San Jose was opened in Chiclayo, Peru in 1962.

Over the years, as well as their service as teachers in the separate school system, as music teachers, as healthcare workers, as nursing educators, in providing care to orphans, and in providing parish ministry, pastoral care, and administering spiritual retreats, the Sisters were also involved in social service ministry. In Windsor, they opened the Roy J. Bondy Centre on September 13, 1970 which was a receiving home for the Children's Aid Society, withdrawing in 1982 but continuing to provide residential care for disabled children afterward. In London, they opened Internos, a residence for teenage girls attending school and later for troubled teens (to 1979). This was followed by the opening of St. Joseph's Detoxification Centre on September 13, 1973 (to 2005) and St. Stephen's House, an alcoholic recovery centre on February 1, 1982 (to 2000). Loughlin House in London opened as a residence for ex-psychiatric female patients in 1986 (to 1989), followed by the Home for Women in Need at 534 Queens Avenue in 1979 (to 2004). Later, St. Joseph's House for Refugees was opened in 1987 (to 2005), followed by St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre, a food security program, on February 2, 1983.

On November 22, 2012, the congregation amalgamated with those in Hamilton, Peterborough, and Pembroke into one charitable corporation under the name Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in

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Canada by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Act, a Private Act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which received Royal Assent on June 13, 2013.

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## Scope and content

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This series contains the history of the Ingersoll Mission in Southwestern Ontario by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario. The Sisters contributed to the field of education, social care, and faith formation in the Sacred Heart Parish of the London Diocese. There is a handwritten chronicle in a notebook from 1933 to 1939, and a typed chronicle on loose-leaf paper from 1933 to 1986. There are printed photographs of Reverend Mother Ignatia Campbell, Saint Joseph with Child, and a Monsignor, and various lists of Sisters stationed at St. Joseph's Convent, the Religious Vocation of Sisters from Sacred Heart Parish, Pastors, Associate Pastors, and Parish Priests who served at Sacred Heart Church, inserted within the pages of the chronicles. Topics in the chronicles include the general history of Ingersoll, the activities of the Sisters at St. Joseph's Convent (as well as its rebuilding and refurnishing), the purchase of a new convent-residence on Canterbury Street in Ingersoll, and events and teaching at the Sacred Heart School in Ingersoll. There are also short biographical sketches of the resident priests and pastors who served the Sacred Heart Mission. There are also short historical summaries, drafts, and notes on the research and background information on the chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent. In addition, there is correspondence from 1881 to 1936 and newsclippings from 1968-1997 relating to Eighth Grade graduation, the retirement of Father Augustine Fuerth, and the historical milestones of Sacred Heart Parish. There is a pamphlet titled \*Church of the Sacred Heart - Centennial Programme\* from 1979 and a 1985 directory of the Sacred Heart Parish that has printed pictures of parish families engaging in activities like gardening, picnicking, and playing games. In addition, there are photographs of the Sisters of St. Joseph who were stationed in Ingersoll: Sister Sheila Collins, Sister Audrey Dunn, Sister Mary James Finucan, Sister St. Jude Finucan, Sister Mary Leo Kirwin, Sister Innocentia O'Meara, Sister Mary Catherine McSherry, Sister Mary Louise McSherry, Sister Julita Monkel, Sister Teresa Shannon, and Sister Maureen Shearon.

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## Notes

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### Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title is based on the contents of the series.

### Immediate source of acquisition

These records were accumulated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario.

### Arrangement

Original order was maintained.

### Location of originals

The records are located at The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Archives.

## Restrictions on access

The Archives reserves the right to restrict access to the collection depending on the condition of the archival material, the amount of material requested, and the purpose of the research. The use of certain materials may also be restricted for reasons of privacy or sensitivity, or under a donor agreement. Access restrictions will be applied equally to all researchers and reviewed periodically. No researcher will be given access to any materials that contain a personal information bank such as donor agreements or personnel records, or to other proprietary information such as appraisals, insurance valuations, or condition reports.

## Conditions governing use

Permission to study archival records does not extend to publication or display rights. The researcher must request this permission in writing from the Archives.

## Finding aids

Series and file list available.

## Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

## Note [Sources]

Sacred Heart Church, "Retrospect: Sacred Heart Church, Ingersoll, Ontario, 1880 – 1980," [https://webresources.oxfordcounty.ca/umbraco/documents/history/sacred%20heart\\_recognized.pdf](https://webresources.oxfordcounty.ca/umbraco/documents/history/sacred%20heart_recognized.pdf), accessed 2024/09/20.

Map of Ontario treaties and reserves - Between the Lakes Purchase Treaty 3, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-ontario-treaties-and-reserves>, accessed 2024/09/20.

Youth for Christ Unlimited Southwestern Ontario - Ingersoll, "Land Acknowledgement,": <https://yfcingersoll.com/land-acknowledgement/>, accessed 2024/09/20.

Manzara, Loretta, pers. comm., September 20, 2024.

## Note [General]

In 1848, the Sacred Heart Church in Ingersoll, Ontario was built and in 1856, the Parish of Ingersoll was allocated to the Diocese of London by the Holy See. Father M. J. Lynch took charge of the Parish in 1858, and began to build a school in Ingersoll, while establishing the Catholic Separate Schools. The Sacred Heart School on John Street was completed in 1860. In 1877, when Father Bartholomew Boubat assumed his post as the resident priest, the church and parish house were in a state of decay and required serious attention. That same year, Father Boubat requested the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario, help establish a mission in Ingersoll and teach in concurrence with the newly formed Separate School Board. The Town of Ingersoll, Ontario, is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinabewaki, Attiwoonderonk (Neutral), Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Mississauga People, and covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase (Treaty 3, 1792).

In December 1878, Mother Aloysia Nigh and Sister Gertrude Coughlin arrived in Ingersoll to help with preparations. Father Boubat donated his old house to be renovated for the Sisters residence-convent and built himself a new rectory. In January 1879, St. Joseph's Convent of Ingersoll was opened and blessed. Sister Angela McKeough was assigned the music coordinator and in August 1879 Mother Augustine Boyle was appointed Superior. Sister Berchmans Colovin was her assistant, and they took charge of Sacred Heart School. Sister Stanislaus Roche taught instrumental and vocal classes, and Sister Magdalene oversaw

domestic affairs. A repaired and improved Sacred Heart Church opened in the spring of 1880. However, in February 1885, Reverend Mother Ignatia Campbell, in a decision with Bishop Walsh, withdrew the Sisters from the mission and left Ingersoll due to unresolved matters with the Pastor. Teaching was taken over by lay teachers.

In 1889, the new resident priest Father Joseph P. Molphy requested the London Sisters return to teach. Mother Ignatia consented and accompanied four Sisters to Ingersoll. Upon their arrival, the Sacred Heart School lacked all modern equipment, and their residence St. Joseph's Convent was below the standard of cleanliness. The Convent used coal-oil lamps as the only means of lighting and a coal stove that required tedious refueling to heat the house. Construction began on a new St. Joseph's Convent to the right of the old residence in 1913 and the Sisters moved in upon completion in September 1920. Mother DeSales Gould was appointed Superior and taught 70 pupils in one class. Sister Ambrosia Durkin was the Principal and taught 54 pupils in another classroom. Sister Stanislaus Roche resumed teaching music, and Sister Rose Bondy was the housekeeper. The Sisters made monthly academic achievement reports for their large classes, whilst taking care of the altar linens, visiting the sick in the parish, and giving instruction in catechism.

In 1919, the Sacred Heart School was condemned by an Inspector due to severe overcrowding and the dilapidated state of the school. Father John L. Gnam, the current Pastor of the parish, bought a property south of the Sacred Heart Church and renovated the building. The new Sacred Heart School opened in January 1921 with one room. By 1925 there were 10 classrooms, a gymnasium, library, and offices. On August 1, 1929, a great fire that started in a closet under the stairs burned through the wall and traveled straight up the center of the house and destroyed St. Joseph's Convent. Reconstruction work commenced immediately and rapidly under the direction of the current priest of Sacred Heart Church, Father Augustine Fuerth. The Sisters were able to move back into a rebuilt St. Joseph's Convent in October 1929, with brand new the oak floors, electrical fixtures, furniture, and piano.

In September 1939, the Sisters taught students from Grades 1 to 12. Manual Training and Home Economics were special subject courses that were introduced to the school. In September 1940, the Board of Education abolished middle school examinations, and high schools were granted the jurisdiction to decide on middle school subjects. The School Board then decided to discontinue the middle school classes due to a shortage of funds resulting in a reduced staff of three teachers. In 1968, St. Joseph's Convent was closed and the two remaining teaching Sisters left Ingersoll and moved to a convent in the City of Woodstock. The Sisters commuted from Woodstock to teach in Ingersoll for two years, until the closure of the convent in Woodstock.

In July 1980, Reverend Charles Campbell, the current Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, requested Sister Katherine McKeough, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario, to assign Sisters to work with him in the parish. On August 14, 1981, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph purchased a split level four-bedroom brick on Canterbury Street in Ingersoll, for Sisters Aloysia Van Dorresteyn (Superior), Mary Winnifrid Dunn, Mary William Moir, and Mary James Finucan. The Sisters provided pastoral care, spiritual guidance, social work, and counselling to the Catholic families of the Sacred Heart Parish. The Sisters taught religious classes at the Sacred Heart School, and at St. Jude's School in Ingersoll, St. Joseph's School in Thamesford, and to children in various public schools in the area. They assisted in sacristy work, conducted communion services, held vigils at funeral homes, and ecumenical services at nursing homes. They also conducted visitations to the elderly and the ill at the Alexander Hospital Ingersoll, Oxford Regional Home, and the Oxford Nursing Home in Ingersoll. On April 3, 1986, a decision was made to end the Ingersoll Mission in order to move onto other endeavours where the Sisters were needed. On April 13, 1986, a public announcement was published in the \*Sacred Heart's Sunday Bulletin\* on the closure of the convent on Canterbury Street, and on May 21, 1986, St. Joseph's Convent in Ingersoll officially closed, and the Sisters returned to London, Ontario.

## Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
  - **Level of detail:** Minimal
  - **Status description:** Final
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## Access points

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- Multiple media (documentary form)
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## Collection holdings

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### **File: F01-S044-01 - Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent, and correspondence**

Title: Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent, and correspondence

Reference code: F01-S044-01

Date: 1933-1986 (date of creation)

: 0375

Location of originals: London Annals Box 7 (0375)

Publication status:

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### **File: F01-S044-02 - Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent**

Title: Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent

Reference code: F01-S044-02

Date: 1933-1986 (date of creation)

: 0375

Location of originals: London Annals Box 7 (0375)

Publication status:

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### **File: F01-S044-03 - History drafts**



Title: History drafts

Reference code: F01-S044-03

Date: 1980-1983 (date of creation)

: 0375

Location of originals: London Annals Box 7 (0375)

Publication status:

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**File: F01-S044-04 - Sacred Heart Church Parish Families 1985, and news clippings**

Title: Sacred Heart Church Parish Families 1985, and news clippings

Reference code: F01-S044-04

Date: 1964-1997 (date of creation)

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Location of originals: London Annals Box 7 (0375)

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